



National Commission on
Correctional Health Care

NCCHC Accreditation

*Recognition From the Most Respected Name
in Correctional Health Care*

Singular Focus, Sweeping Experience

For more than 30 years, NCCHC has been at the forefront of the national effort to advance correctional health care. With our expertise in establishing correctional health care standards, we have helped thousands of correctional and health professionals to provide cost-effective health services that are qualified to meet constitutional requirements and standards. Our success—and the success of facilities that have been accredited by NCCHC—is unparalleled.

Unmatched Expertise and Experience

- NCCHC is the oldest, most respected and most influential organization in correctional health care, with the support of the nation's leading organizations in health, law and corrections.
- Unequaled in their relevance and importance for today's correctional facilities, NCCHC's *Standards for Health Services* are recognized by the medical profession and the courts as the benchmark for establishing and measuring a correctional health services system.
- The leaders in accreditation for correctional health services, NCCHC has a history of success in guiding the nation's jails, prisons and juvenile detention and confinement facilities toward continual improvement in health care delivery.
- Accreditation by NCCHC is a mark of achievement that you can proudly share with government officials and community leaders. It means that your facility has been evaluated by an independent professional organization well-versed in the challenges of correctional health care delivery and unbiased in its determinations.

Health Services Standards

Accreditation is based on NCCHC's *Standards for Health Services*. The *Standards* are the recommended guidelines for managing the delivery of medical, dental and mental health care within correctional systems.

The *Standards* were first developed in the 1970s as part of the American Medical Association's initiative to improve health services in the nation's correctional facilities. Since its incorporation in 1983, NCCHC has remained the guardian of this rich legacy of practice to promote quality health care in corrections.

Developed by experts from the professions of health, law and corrections, separate standards exist for health care delivery in jails, prisons and juvenile detention and confinement facilities. The *Standards* provide clear-cut, easy-to-follow guidance on each standard's requirements and defined expectations. The current editions have a strong focus on quality and outcomes, and offer more flexibility in how to achieve results.

The *Standards* cover nine general areas:

- Health care services and support
- Inmate care and treatment
- Health promotion and disease prevention
- Special patient needs and services
- Health records
- Medical-legal issues
- Governance and administration
- Environmental health and safety
- Personnel and training

Why Accreditation Matters

- Promotes and documents an efficient, well-managed system of health care delivery
- Lends prestige to the facility
- Increases staff morale
- Aids recruiting efforts
- Helps to obtain community support
- Provides justification for budgetary requests
- Protects financial assets by minimizing the occurrence of adverse events, thus avoiding health-care related lawsuits and often reducing liability premiums
- Protects the health of the public, staff and inmates by assuring that those incarcerated and released receive adequate and appropriate health care

For more information...

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The Legal Context of Accreditation

In the 1976 landmark decision of *Estelle v. Gamble*, the Supreme Court ruled that prisoners have a right to be free of "deliberate indifference to their serious health care needs." Although there has been some fine-tuning, the legal landscape has remained largely unchanged.

In the hundreds of cases published since *Estelle*, three basic rights have emerged: the right to access to care, the right to care that is ordered, and the right to a professional medical judgment. The failure to honor these rights has resulted in protracted litigation, the awarding of damages and attorneys' fees, and the issuance of injunctions regarding the delivery of health care services.

The best correctional facilities have adopted procedures, using NCCHC's standards as a guide, that provide constitutional care to inmates and that protect them from litigation. Because litigation is so expensive, it is well worth the effort to achieve compliance with NCCHC's standards and to gain accreditation.

Facilities that meet NCCHC's standards and achieve accreditation are frequently regarded favorably by the courts. There are no correctional health care standards that are more stringent nor an accreditation program as thorough as the National Commission on Correctional Health Care's. In case after case, NCCHC's standards have been held as the model to which correctional facilities should strive.

As resources become increasingly scarce and you are faced with doing more with less, compliance with NCCHC's standards will help you avoid costly and time consuming litigation, and preserve expenditure of resources that would be better spent elsewhere. Your voluntary compliance with NCCHC's standards demonstrates to government officials, the public and the courts your understanding of the legal requirements of correctional health care.

*Adapted from NCCHC's Standards for Health Services
"The Legal Context of Accreditation"
by William J. Rold, JD, CCHP-A*



Orleans Parish Sheriff Marlon Guzman joins the health services staff in showing their pride in NCCHC accreditation.

Pursuing Accreditation

Initial Steps

The first step in the accreditation process is to review the *Standards for Health Services* appropriate to your correctional setting and to complete an application for accreditation. You can review and download the accreditation application on our website at www.ncchc.org/accred. When we receive your application, we will send you a self-survey questionnaire (SSQ), which will help you prepare for the on-site survey.

The Survey

Once you feel you are ready, the survey is scheduled. The length of the survey depends on the size of your facility and the complexity of health services provided but, on average, is usually 2 to 3 days.

Our survey teams are made up of experienced physicians, nurses, health administrators and other health professionals who understand corrections and combine that knowledge with their professional expertise. They will review medical records as well as policies and procedures; interview health staff, correctional officers and inmates; and tour the facility. At the end of the survey, an exit conference will be conducted to discuss their preliminary findings.

NCCHC approaches surveys as an educational experience for you and your staff. We are committed to helping you to achieve compliance with the standards and to benefit from the accreditation experience.

Accreditation Decisions

Upon completion of the site visit, the survey team submits a report to NCCHC's accreditation committee. The committee reviews all reports blindly and renders a determination of compliance with the standards.

The facility will receive a comprehensive written report that includes recommendations to assist your continuing compliance.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q Does NCCHC accredit small facilities as well as large?

A Absolutely! NCCHC accredits facilities of all shapes and sizes, including those with as few as 20 beds and as many as 10,000 beds.

Q What if some of the standards do not apply to our facility?

A NCCHC takes a practical approach to the accreditation process. Only those standards that apply to your facility are employed in the evaluation. For instance, if your facility does not have an infirmary, then the standard on infirmary care is omitted from the survey. Similarly, if a facility does not house female inmates, the standard on care of the pregnant inmate is omitted.

Q How much does accreditation cost?

A The nonrefundable application fee is \$250. The actual cost of accreditation is based on the facility type (i.e., jail, prison, juvenile), its average daily population, whether it has satellite operations, what special medical services it provides and other factors. Using this information, we will provide an estimate of accreditation fees. After accreditation has been achieved, there is a subsequent annual fee.

Representatives from Broward County Sheriff's Office showed up in force to receive the Facility of the Year award in 2009.



Technical Assistance

Establishing standards is only one of many ways that NCCHC helps correctional facilities grappling with difficult health care issues. With our extensive network of experts in all sectors of correctional medical and mental health care, as well as our track record of helping correctional systems provide efficient and effective health care, NCCHC can help you find appropriate solutions.

Informal, ongoing assistance on accreditation issues is provided at no charge to accredited facilities. Formal technical assistance is available for a fee that is based on the nature of the assistance, the time it will require and the number of consultants needed. As a not-for-profit organization dedicated to helping you provide effective health care services, NCCHC strives to keep costs as low as possible. At your request, we will develop a proposal that details the assistance we will provide and the associated costs.

Customized Consultation

NCCHC offers customized consultation to systems or individual facilities preparing for accreditation, developing policies and procedures, reviewing alternative solutions to problems, implementing risk assessment and management, seeking expert testimony and much more.

These recent consultations reflect the scope and diversity of the ways we can help: addressing staffing concerns for a county jail with growing health care needs and financial constraints; evaluating a jail system's health service delivery against national standards at the request of county commissioners; helping a small juvenile facility establish an effective receiving screening program; and working with a state prison system to develop and implement a quality improvement system.

Depending on your needs and preferences, assistance may be provided by telephone, or it might entail on-site review, specific recommendations with instructions for how to administer programs, or hands-on assistance in implementing and monitoring solutions.

Although each technical assistance is unique to the client, common threads do exist. There is no charge for the initial consultation and proposal. If requested, proposals may contain several options as to the extent and cost of the consultation. Fees are based on the number of consultants, the nature of the assistance and the time it requires. Most clients find the technical assistance to be surprisingly affordable.

While most assistances take place over 1 to 2 days, the duration ranges from half-day presentations to ongoing consultations. Documentation of findings and recommendations is provided in as much detail as the client requests, and the client is able to review the draft and make suggestions.

“We discovered that the accreditation process was a valuable learning experience for our staff. It brought us together as a team even more. It validated our belief in our health care delivery system and improved our credibility within the facility.”

– Health Services Manager, Montana State Prison, Deer Lodge, MT

Mental Health Accreditation

NCCHC now publishes standards and offers a voluntary accreditation program geared to the treatment of incarcerated individuals with mental illness. These tools can help facilities determine proper levels of care, organize systems more effectively and efficiently, and demonstrate that constitutional requirements are being met.

Why a separate set of standards? Mental health care has been integral to the NCCHC standards and accreditation program from the start. When the first standards were developed in the 1970s—with the input of mental health professionals—it was decided to integrate medical and mental health standards to encourage a unified and holistic approach to inmate care.

But as the number of incarcerated persons with mental illness has soared, systems are developing new strategies for providing treatment to these inmates. For example, some have opted to manage mental health services under a legal authority separate from their other correctional health services. NCCHC's mental health standards and accreditation program were designed for correctional facilities in which the legal authority for mental health services is separate from their other correctional health services, and both parties are not already accredited under the *Standards for Health Services* for jails or prisons. This way, a correctional mental health services program may seek accreditation even if the health services counterpart is not. While it is always beneficial to pursue accreditation as a unified health care delivery system, this accreditation option is available to mental health services programs for the achievement of excellence in mental health services organization and delivery.

Intended for correctional facilities of any size, these standards parallel those for health services in format and substance, but they are more explicit in what is required for adequate delivery of mental health services. Likewise, the mental health services accreditation program operates in the same manner as that for health services.

OTP Accreditation

NCCHC also offers an accreditation program for opioid treatment programs (OTP) in correctional facilities. Accreditation by NCCHC enables OTPs to obtain legally required certification from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

One of only six accrediting bodies so authorized by SAMHSA and the only one focusing on corrections, NCCHC has developed standards that comply with federal regulations and that recognize the special nature of correctional facilities. Health services accreditation by NCCHC is not required to seek OTP accreditation.

“While our goal is to strive for excellence in health care for our residents at all times, it is empowering to have a team of professionals affirm that the needs of the youth in our care meet the standards set forth in juvenile corrections.”

*– Superintendent, Naselle (Washington)
Youth Camp*

Want to Learn More About NCCHC's Standards?

The Saturday seminars that kick off NCCHC's Spring and Fall conferences provide detailed guidance on how to achieve compliance.

Tap Into Our Expertise

Let NCCHC be your guide as you navigate the complex world of correctional health care. Our *Standards* are the foundation, enumerating the recommended requirements for correctional health services. Beyond customized technical assistance, we also offer position statements that address emerging issues not covered in the standards, guidelines that help health care providers manage care for patients with critical chronic diseases and publications to keep you informed about important developments. These and other resources are available at www.ncchc.org.

Guidelines for Disease Management

NCCHC develops guidelines to help correctional health professionals effectively manage diseases commonly found in jails, prisons and juvenile facilities. The guidelines are adapted for the correctional environment from nationally accepted clinical guidelines from federal and specialty organizations such as the National Institutes of Health; the American Diabetes Association; the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute; and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

These guidelines are meant to supplement—not replace—these national guidelines. With a focus on the challenges and special considerations inherent in correctional settings, they are designed to help correctional health care providers improve patient care outcomes. NCCHC's guidelines encourage total disease management, which requires clear indicators of the degree of disease control and, frequently, a determination of whether the condition is stable, improving or deteriorating. Each guideline also provides a list of resources to support evidence-based practice and quality improvement. The guidelines are reviewed periodically and are posted online when current.

Position Statements

Occasionally, an issue arises that has not been addressed by the *Standards*, or medical/technical advances have occurred since the *Standards* were last revised. Accordingly, NCCHC has adopted several position statements that, along with the published standards, may assist correctional facilities in designing policies and procedures on these matters. More than a dozen position statements address topics such as administrative management of HIV, response to inmate abuse, health services research and telemedicine technology.

The Health Status of Soon-to-Be-Released Inmates: A Report to Congress

This national, three-year study was the largest and most comprehensive of its kind and remains an important resource today. With funding from Congress through the National Institute of Justice, and with substantial support from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, NCCHC convened expert panels comprised of the nation's most respected researchers, practitioners and scholars in the fields of public and correctional health care.

The report documents that public investment in improved correctional health care can result in cost savings to the public and protection of the public's health. It validates the importance of correctional health care and can be used to help educate the public and advocate for additional resources. Corrections and correctional health professionals have used the report to support increased funding and better community relations.

"NCCHC accreditation is a badge of honor and prompts us to excel in the delivery of correctional medical care."

– Health Services Administrator, Clayton County Detention Facility, Jonesboro, GA

About the National Commission

Our mission is to improve the quality of health care provided in jails, prisons and juvenile confinement facilities. With support from the major national organizations representing the fields of health, law and corrections, NCCHC's leadership in setting standards for health services is widely recognized and its accreditation program is unsurpassed. Building on that foundation, we offer a broad array of resources to help correctional health care systems provide efficient, high quality care.

Educational Programs

Our flagship National Conference on Correctional Health Care is the must-attend event of the year. With exceptional educational programs, abundant networking and the best exhibition in this field, this five-day Fall conference attracts thousands of dedicated professionals. Similar in design but smaller in scale, our Spring meeting, Updates in Correctional Health Care, boasts a content-rich program and cutting-edge topics presented in a four-day format.

The two-day Correctional Mental Health Seminar, held in July, draws hundreds of practitioners and administrators seeking to improve mental health and substance abuse services. Other offerings, such as the two-day intensive Boot Camps, target specific audiences such as medical directors and health services administrators.

Certification

The Certified Correctional Health Professional program recognizes the professionalism of health care providers from a variety of disciplines and settings in the correctional field. The highly regarded CCHP designation has been awarded to thousands of professionals nationwide who have demonstrated mastery of national standards and the special knowledge and skills expected of leaders in this complex and ever-changing field. CCHPs may also opt to pursue Advanced certification (CCHP-A), and registered nurses can now obtain specialty certification as a CCHP-RN.

Publications and Resources

NCCHC offers the best publications in correctional health care. Our growing catalog offers essential titles such as NCCHC's *Standards for Health Services* and *Correctional Health Care: Guidelines for the Management of an Adequate Delivery System*. Two quarterlies, *CorrectCare* and the *Journal of Correctional Health Care*, are the leading periodicals in this field. We also offer reference works from other publishers, as well as free access to guidelines, position statements and other resources.

www.ncchc.org

Supporting Organizations

Academy of Correctional Health Professionals
American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry
American Academy of Pediatrics
American Academy of Physician Assistants
American Academy of Psychiatry and the Law
American Association of Public Health Physicians
American Bar Association
American College of Emergency Physicians
American College of Healthcare Executives
American College of Neuropsychiatrists
American College of Physicians
American College of Preventive Medicine
American Correctional Health Services Association
American Counseling Association
American Dental Association
American Dietetic Association
American Health Information Management Association
American Jail Association
American Medical Association
American Nurses Association
American Osteopathic Association
American Pharmacists Association
American Psychiatric Association
American Psychological Association
American Public Health Association
American Society of Addiction Medicine
Association of State and Territorial Health Officials
International Association for Correctional and Forensic Psychology
National Association of Counties
National Association of County and City Health Officials
National Association of Social Workers
National District Attorneys Association
National Juvenile Detention Association
National Medical Association
National Sheriffs' Association
Society for Adolescent Health and Medicine
Society of Correctional Physicians